

AMENDED

CLAIMS

1. Natural cheese which comprises a lactic acid bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus gasseri* having a disinfection potency against *Helicobacter pylori*.
2. The natural cheese according to claim 1, wherein the lactic acid bacterium is resistant to low pH environment.
3. The natural cheese according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the lactic acid bacterium is *Lactobacillus gasseri* OLL 2716 (FERM BP-6999) or a mutant thereof.
4. The natural cheese according to any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the lactic acid bacterium is present at a viable count of 10^7 cfu/g or more when preserved at a temperature of 10°C or less for 6 months.
5. A food which comprises the natural cheese according to any one of claims 1 to 4.
6. (Amended) A process for producing the natural cheese according to any one of claims 1 to 4, which comprises:

people as well as babies and infants, aged people, valetudinarians, and convalescents and the like for a long period of time and exerts a particularly excellent prophylactic and/or therapeutic effect of gastritis, gastric ulcer and the like.

As described above, an *L. gasseri* count can be maintained at a sufficient level by employing standard production conditions or preservation conditions in producing or preserving cheese. Furthermore, when a step of addition of an yeast extract and/or a step of incubating the curd after molding and pressing is added to the above production process, the proliferation activity and survival of *L. gasseri* can be further enhanced. Thus, *L. gasseri* grows in cheese dominantly over other lactic acid bacteria and the bacterial count can be maintained for a long period of time. Thus, *L. gasseri* can be sufficiently ingested in a necessary bacterial count even with only small food intake. The present invention can also be considered as highly useful from this viewpoint.

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adding an yeast extract to a milk component before formation of a curd.

7. The process according to claim 6, wherein the curd is incubated without being cooled after molding and pressing.

8. The process according to claim 6 or 7, wherein the curd is incubated at 20 to 35°C for 16 to 26 hours.

9. The process according to any one of claims 6 to 8, wherein a lactic acid bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus gasseri* having a disinfection potency against *Helicobacter pylori* is added to raw milk as a starter.

10. The process according to any one of claims 6 to 9, wherein the lactic acid bacterium is *Lactobacillus gasseri* OLL 2716 (FERM BP-6999) or a mutant thereof.